

A
DISCOURSE
ON
PERSECUTION,
OR,

Suffering for **CHRIST's** Sake.

Clearing the *Notion* of It;

AND

Making a Discrimination of *Just* from *Unjust*
Pretensions to It.

AND

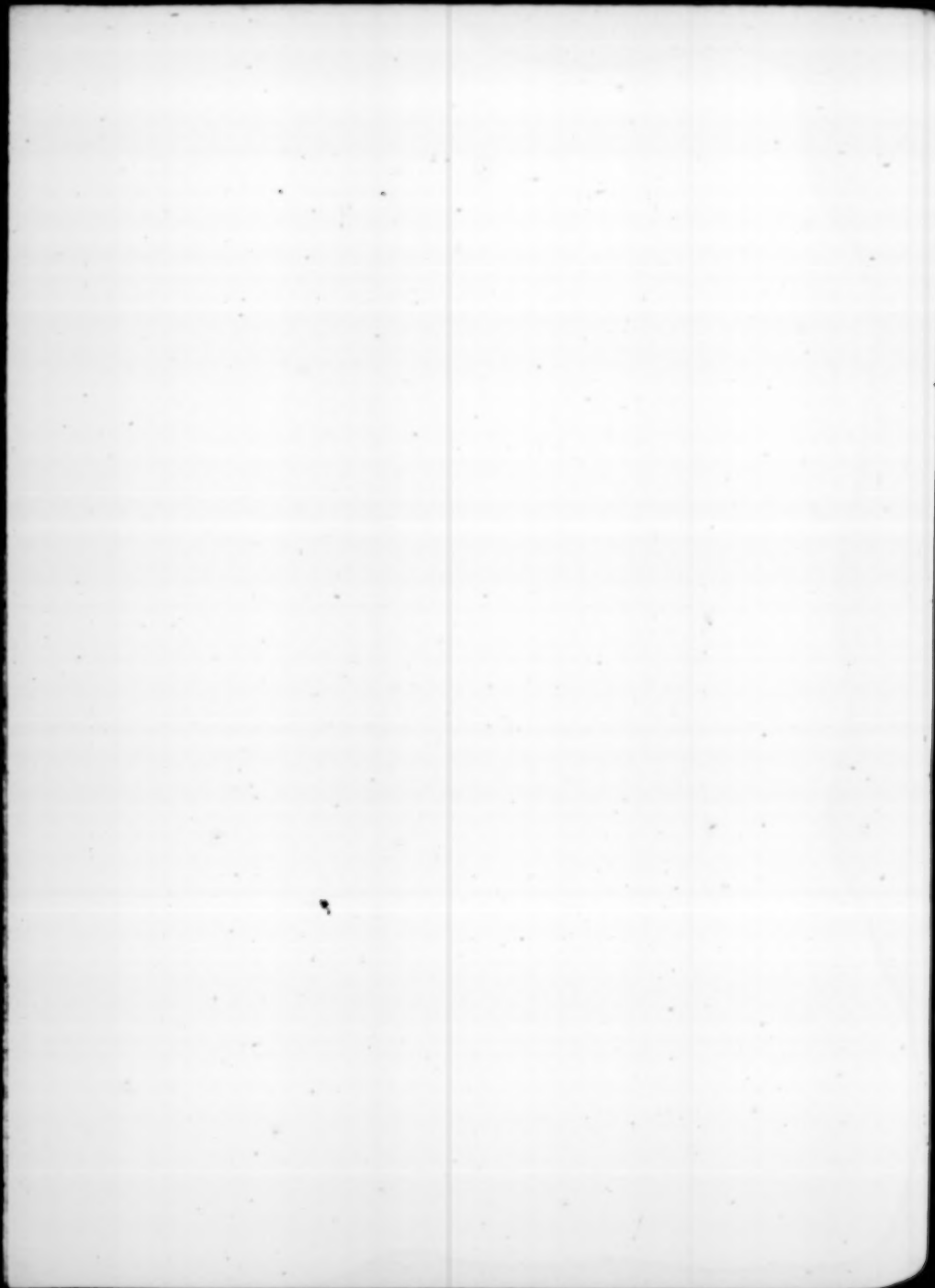
Passionately Recommending True *Christian Suffering* to all
Those who shall be Call'd Thereto.

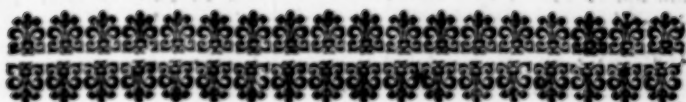
Occasionally Representing the *Folly* and *Sinfulness* of *Illegal,*
Arbitrary Courses for the *Prevention* of It, and the *Secu-*
rity of our Church.

By **JOHN HOWELL**, A M. Rector of *Radnor Nova*
in the County of *Radnor*.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Robert Kettlewell*, at the *Hand and Scepter* over
against *St. Dunstan's Church* in *Fleetstreet*. -1685.





To the Worthily Honour'd
JOHN STONE,
Of Brightwel-Place in Oxfordshire,
ESQUIRE.

SIR,

I*T seems very wonderful to me, that after the clear Revelation of Scripture, and the Instructions of Men; after the many Renowned Examples of Christian Suffering, the Repeated Instances of every Age; after all Mens Fears and Apprehensions, Reasonable and Unreasonable, (for either of these are apt to awaken, and engage to Consideration) the generality even of Christians themselves should be such utter Strangers (as I find they are) of the True Notion and Nature of Persecution.*

Now to Rectifie the Mistakes, and Clear the Understandings of the Ignorant Herein, is the main Design of the ensuing Discourse.

And truly, I am not out of all hopes of giving some Light to the Doctrine in hand; at least wise, of doing somewhat towards the Satisfaction of Those (if this small Piece shall haply fall into their Hands) who either have not heard of, or have not had leisure to peruse, or possibly have not been able to procure the Larger and more Elaborate Discourses on this Subject. Were I sure it would prove wholly useless, (tho I
am

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am apt to Hope, and induc'd by Learned Friends to Believe, it will not) I should wade the Publication of this Address for Your sake, and of the Discourse for my own.

Sure I am, it can do no harm, nor justly give any Offence, being written with the Faithfulness and with the Tenderneſs of a Spiritual Chirurgeon. Alas! our Breaches are over-wide already; they need not be widned more by harsh Reflexion, and keenneſs of Expreſſion. Some Spirits are naturally Perverſe and Froward, and ought (if poſſible) to be Corrected and Sweetned, not Exaſperated more, not ſtirr'd in to a greater Ferment.

Of This I am extremely ſenſible; and deſire not to Provoke, but to Heal. If I were (tho, praiſed be God, I am not) of another Frame of Spirit, I am ſure I ſhould take an ill time to ſhew it in, when I addreſs to You; to You (Sir), who ſeem to be made up of Gentleneſs and Temper. Your Reasonings with Diſſenters (who do therefore chuſe to apply themſelves to You) they are Sedate, and Calm, and full of an Obliging Condeſcention. Your Delight it is (and You make it Your Buſineſs) to Argue Fairly, and Lovingly perſuade Men to Conformity. And when all Your Arguments, and Winning Behaviour will not do it, (And who can promiſe himſelf a never-failing Succeſs?) You gain This Point howſoever, They come over to a better Opinion of our Church and Church-men: They are ſatisfied by You, that it's the Churches Deſire, as it is Yours, to Invite, rather than Compel; to Convince, that it may not Correct them.

Thus do You diſcharge Your Duty diligently, and chearfully, like a True Son of our Church, a Faithful, Exemplary Magiſtrate, a Loyal Subject, and a Good Chriſtian: I ought to add, like a True Friend of our Clergy; for ſuch do You (I muſt needs acknowledge it) upon all Occaſions approve Your ſelf: (For of This (to ſay nothing of others) Your Favours to me, Many and Great, are a pregnant Argument: ſo much as I can in no wiſe attribute them to any the leaſt Merit of mine,
but

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but to Your Goodness, and Respect to my Gown.) And thus while You temper Your Prudence with Piety, and joyn Sobriety and Candour, to an inviolable Loyalty, and Reverence to the Church, You stop the Mouths of Gainsayers; and even Those who Suffer under You, cannot be angry. This is certainly the most Christian, and most feasible Course for the filling our Churches; and it is Yours. And if Men will stand out notwithstanding; if they will not learn by Your Example, nor bow to Your Reasons, nor hearken to Your Counsels and Persuasions; they become still the more inexcusable; they may thank themselves for what they endure; and are as far from what may be term'd Persecution, as they are from Conformity: unless You will say, they are their own Persecutors.

I pray God to make 'em sensible of their Errors, and thoroughly satisfied of the High Injustice of arraigning their Governours for that which it is their Duty to do.

The Subordinate Magistrate is oblig'd to see that the Laws be put in Execution; and the Supreme is oblig'd to take care that there be such Laws as are apt and qualified to Engage, and to Preserve Men in Peace, Concord, and Uniformity. The Government it self cannot well, I was going to say, it cannot innocently Tolerate Men in a Schism; certainly it cannot give any Man License to sin: neither is it in the Power of any Law, or Dispensation, to make that Justifiable and Lawful, which in its own Nature is Evil and Sinful. Such, unquestionably, is all Separation from This, or any other Establish'd Church, that is Sound, and Pure, as Ours is.

But and if the Government could (as it cannot) make Separation no Schism, and no Sin; yet (I would observe, and I hold my self oblig'd upon This occasion to vindicate the Proceedings of our Governours herein) That neither has the Government any reason to grant, nor our Nonconforming Brethren any reason to expect a Toleration, or Relaxation of the Laws.

I know, These two things are almost co-incident: however, they will severally admit of a distinct and particular Consideration.

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I. Then,

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1. *Then, I would observe, That the Government has no reason to grant a Toleration, &c. For if These Men do not Suffer, the Government in all likelihood will; there being nothing more destructive of the Publick Peace, than a General Liberty of all sorts of Worship.*

Of This we have had Late and Sad Experience. When every man did that which was right in his own eyes, it was little consider'd, whether it was right, or not, in the eyes of others. Men abus'd their Liberty into Defiance of Authority; perfect Lawlessness being the Result. When one Man out of a giddy humour wandred about in search after Truth, another thought he might as easily find it at home: When This Man thought he might serve God in any way, his Neighbour was of opinion, that 'twas altogether as good, and much more easie, not to serve him at all. So then, we may easily divine, by what we have seen and felt, that a Connivance, or Toleration of all sorts of Religion, is the ready way to destroy all that looks like Religion; and that (had it not pleas'd Heaven to direct our Governours herein) our Nation would have sunk by degrees to downright Scepticism and Infidelity; to as little Sense of Religion, as some of a Neighbouring Country are said to have done, who, by a general Allowance of all sorts of Worship, had made their Consciences so pliable, that they could renounce their Bible, when it serv'd a Turn, and cry, they were Hollanders, and not Christians.

But, secondly, As the Government has no reason to grant, so, it may be considered further, that our Dissenting Brethren have no reason to expect a Toleration.

And here I shall not need to mind them of the Old Non-conformists Opinion in the Case; who plainly declar'd, that to Allow of different sorts of Worship, was inconvenient, unreasonable, and extremely dangerous to Church and State. I would only offer to consideration, Whether We (if We were in Their Circumstances, and They in Ours) might in any reason expect This Liberty from Them. What (would they say)
shall

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shall we admit of That which we verily believe is unlawful? Would you have us Allow, openly to Allow of That in others, which we cannot Allow in our selves? Would you have us wanting in our Respect and Care for your Souls, which we are oblig'd to upon a double account, as Christians, and as Governours? To countenance That which is, or That which is taken for a Sin, is a Sin: And to encourage it by the way of Toleration, is to countenance it with a witness: And how can we do This thing, and sin against God, and our own Consciences? This sure is what every of them would be ready to offer: This is what they with reason might. And now do but invert the Scene, and we have the plain Case between us and them. Our Governours know, and are persuaded, that Separation from our Church is Schism; and that Schism is a very grievous Sin. They cannot unconcernedly see any Persons engag'd in it: and for Those who are under their Government and Care, they cannot give them That Liberty, which would prove mischievous in the abuse of it, and is therefore onely desir'd, that it may be abus'd: So that for them to expect a Toleration, is to expect That which cannot reasonably be expected: it is to expect That which they themselves, if they were in Power, would never grant, or think it reasonable that it should be expected from them: indeed, it is to expect That, which several of them will not at present Allow to their own Children, and Dependents.

I would not be mistaken: I do not, nor can I approve of Compulsion in all Cases. Religion is such a Worship and Service of God, as supposes the Concurrence of the Will; and now the Will cannot be forc'd, it is free as Thought, and is persuaded by Words, rather than Blows, as Lactantius well observ'd: No Humane Laws or Power can possibly take hold of it; it is out of the reach of Fire and Faggot, and all the Affrighting Instruments of Cruelty; so that it is impossible to be Compell'd (properly speaking) to any Religion; and therefore it is unreasonable any Man should be Compell'd to

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the Profession of any. Indeed it does not lie in any Mans power to be of what Religion himself pleases, tho as to the outward Profession it does : and now no one can be oblig'd beyond his Power : And certainly it is very hard, that a Man should Suffer for not Professing that Religion, which he cannot heartily embrace, and is therefore oblig'd not to profess.

But then I must observe, on the other hand, That there are some Opinions have a natural tendency to Mischief ; to Civil Jars, and Unchristian Divisions ; to Fatal Disturbances in Church and State : And tho a bare Dissent in Judgment may not, should not ; yet These, wherever they are found, do justly come under the Lash of the Law : and if the Church had no Power to shut out the Refractory and Disobedient ; nor the Civil Magistrate any to suppress Heresies, and Schisms, and Disorders in the Church ; there were nothing then to be expected, but Anarchy, and Confusion, and every Evil work. Alas ! we do not live in a Golden Age, that Men should be suppos'd Governable without Laws, or Laws available without their Sanctions, Rewards, and Punishments. Some Men cannot, others hardly can, be kept within tolerable Bounds, notwithstanding them. And what would these be, what would they do, if there were none ? Conscience is frequently, too too frequently abus'd, and made a Cloak for all manner of Villanies ; at best, 'tis a prevailing Principle with those only who have it : many have it not ; and the Magistrate's Sword of Justice has more Rhetorick far, than the Terror of the Lord, to persuade such Men : And Those whom Religion cannot allure or engage, the Gibbet can, and often does Affright into Obedience. Many, who would not stick at Assassinating Princes, Destroying the Church, and Massacring Man, Woman, and Child that stood in their way, are yet kept in by the Execution of wholesom Laws ; and he must be a Bigot indeed, of a very lewd Religion too, that shall do these things, when he must run the danger, the immediate danger of his Life for his pains. So then, You see the Necessity of Laws for Societies,

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Societies, and Sanctions for Laws, and may readily guess, how miserable This Church and Nation were, if there were none; or indeed, if those that are, should never be Executed.

These things consider'd, I cannot see with what Forehead any Man can blame our Governours, either for Making, or Executing the Laws: especially they have none at all against meer Dissenting; much less any that are Sanguinary, as our Roman Neighbours have: they have none of any kind, that in the least savour of Cruelty or Rigour. They never do, after the manner of Rome, extort Mens Opinions from them by Racks and Tortures; and then let loose the Laws upon them, after a Discovery. They are favourable as may be, and slow in inflicting of Punishment: of which This is a fair Argument, That the loud, reiterated Clamours, and Out-cries of the Faction, are not punish'd at all. These would not, certainly they would not be more favourably dealt with in any Establish'd Church of Christendom; neither could we (as I said before) expect more, or so much Favour from them, if they were (as some of them have been, and have again endeavour'd, very lately endeavour'd to be) in the Seat of our Governours.

Surely then it would much better become them, and they would all more like good Subjects, and good Christians, and Men of Reason, if they would consider of things, before they presume to complain of their Governours, and over-liberally promise themselves a Reward for I know not what Services, to I know not whom; I am sure, for none to Christ, and his Religion, when they Suffer (as generally they do) for their Disservice and Disobedience to That Authority which Christ has given to the Higher Powers, and whereto he has very plainly commanded all of us to be Subject. I say, It were Wisdom in them, and it is their Duty, to consider, seriously to consider These things, before they presume to speak evil of their Rulers, and charge them with Rigour, Tyranny, and what not? If they did This, as they ought, they would find, that

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that there are (as I shew in the Discourse) certain Qualifications and Conditions requisite to True Christian Suffering; and that without These no Man can justly pretend to It: and if any should challenge the Title, they would certainly miss of the Crown of the Martyr.

But enough of This; I wish You do not think it more than enough: howsoever it be, I am satisfied of Your Candor and Goodness, and depend upon These. Your Patronage, and Favourable Acceptance I do now stand in need of, and do greatly value, and do here beg. I must confess, I cannot be sorry for what I have done; indeed I must have offer'd violence to my Nature, and could not have easily excus'd my self, had I not (now that so fair an Opportunity presents it self) us'd my Endeavours, my Honest, tho Meane, Endeavours, to convince Men of their Errours, and let them see the Injustice of their Clamours against the Easiest and Best of Governments. And why may not the Honesty of my Design bear me out, as well as the bare Pretence of it does others? I must needs say, I see no Reason for it.

But indeed, the Design is not only Honest; it is Great, and Noble. Loud is the Noise, and Many are the Complaints of Persecution; and, I fear, of dangerous consequence they are, (Complaining of the Government, being a kind of Libelling and Persecuting it :) So that to remove These, is to Ease the Government; to do something towards it, is a proportionably Good and Laudable Office; and even for him who endeavours it only, his Design is as Good and Great, though his Success be not.

That the several Persons by whom These Offences come, may become daily more and more satisfied of the Guilt, and the Unwarrantableness of them; and that You may long continue among us for This, and other Excellent Purposes: That we may long see (as now we do) the Happy Effects of Your Diligence and Faithfulness in Your Administration of Justice; of Your Care and Prudence in a very Regular Family; and of
Your

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Your Excellent Example (joyn'd to the vigorous Endeavours of the Worthy Pastor) in a very Conformable Parish: And that Heaven would Bless You, and Yours, with all Health and Happiness, Spiritual and Temporal, is the hearty Prayer of,

(Honour'd Sir)

Your most Obliged,

and most Obedient Servant,

John Howell.





A
DISCOURSE
 O N
PERSECUTION,
 O R,
 Suffering for Christ's Sake.

W *hatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, and of good report; if they promise any thing of Satisfaction, of Complacency, and Delight; they are readily observ'd; they are chearfully obey'd upon the least Intimation, or slightest Injunction: Men hardly need the Exhortation of a Saviour, or an Apostle, to think of these things. But where there is any thing that suits not with their Interest, or their Natures; where there is any thing clashes with their Temporal Designs, or the Gratification of their Carnal Appetites: here*
 B they

they are apt to cry, with the Disciples in the Gospel, *This is a Hard Saying; who can bear it?* or, with Naaman the Syrian, *In This thing the Lord pardon thy Servant.*

The truth is; He that, in stead of Reason, consults only *Flesh and Blood*, cannot very easily yield to the *Hurting* of the one, or the *Exhausting* of the other. To desire the *Tortures* of the *Rack*, or the *Scorchings* of the *Flames*, looks like a ridiculous piece of Gallantry, an Extravagancy allowable only in Romance, or Phrenzy: I mean, to the meer Carnalist, to one that sees not beyond the Grave. But who so looks within himself, and has an eye to the Recompense of *Reward*, and perceives the Influence, the Aids, and Comforts of the Holy Spirit, and expects more; can (if he would please) desire his *Executioner*, and dare him into a *severer Treatment*;

And indeed, if we consider things as we ought, we shall find, that *Happiness* and *Misery* are not to be measured by the *Enjoyments* or *Sufferings* of this Life; that a Man may in wisdom prefer a *Gibbet* to a *Crown*, and be happy under the *Severities* even of an Inquisition.

For tho *Pains* and *Tortures* are uncouth and irksom; though they grate upon the *Flesh*, and grieve the *Spirit*: yet Nature her self recommends them to us, not only as *Expedient*, but, as extremely *Desirable*; as those that will work for us a far Greater, a more Certain, and more *Durable Good*: for Such they will always prove (we may depend upon it) when our God, who desires our *Happiness*, and is able to procure it, appoints them for us. We readily assent to our Physicians Prescriptions, take Potions tho never so *Unpleasant*, suffer our Members to be *Coup'd*, *Cauteriz'd*, or otherwise *Tortur'd*;
and

and all in expectation, or, it may be, but Deluding Hopes of an *Uncertain Recovery*.

And yet this is no more than what is *reasonable*; no more than what Nature prescribes, when she teaches us the Doctrine of *Self-preservation*, when she enclines us to the love of our selves, and to the pursuit of our Chiefest Good.

How much more reasonable therefore is it, how much more a Dictate of Nature, that we should bear a *Light Affliction*, which is but for a *Moment*, in order to a *Great and Sure Reward*; in order to an *Eternity of Happiness*, the *Certain Recompence* of *Suffering* here for Christ; as I shall have occasion to shew, before I have done with you. At present it may suffice to observe, That the Apostle looks upon it as an Instance of the Divine *Favour*; which he could not well do, if there were not a future *Reward* annex'd to it: *Unto you it is given* (says he) *in the behalf of Christ, not only to Believe on him, but also to Suffer for his sake*, Phil. 1. 29.

I shall bring what I have to say into this Order.

1. I shall inquire, When a Man may be said to *suffer for Christ's sake*?

2. I shall shew, That those among us who renounce our Communion, and *suffer* for it, do very unjustly pretend to *Suffering for Christ*.

3. I shall shew, That all those Christians who *suffer* rather than they will conform to the Church of *Rome*, do truly and really *suffer for Christ*: Provided always, that they do not allow themselves in any known Sins; but that they equally, heartily forsake them all.

4. I shall consider the Excellency and Usefulness of true and real *Suffering for Christ*.

5. And lastly, I shall offer some Motives to a resolute

and chearful *Suffering*, at what time soever it shall please God to call us thereto.

1. Then, I am to inquire, When a Man may be said to *suffer for Christs sake*:

And that will be found to be then, and only then, when these three Circumstances concur.

1. When his Cause is good.

2. When he has a Call.

3. When he has heartily forsaken all his Sins.

1. That a Man may be said to *Suffer for Christs sake*, 'tis requir'd that his Cause be good. As no Man ought to *Die*, or think any *Suffering* acceptable, but when 'tis for a *Truth*; so all kinds of *Truth* cannot place him that *Suffers* for them in the number of the *Persecuted*, or indeed justify or excuse him that *Dies* for them. There are many *Truths* which don't at all concern God, or Religion; and he is necessary to his own *Death*, who freely offers his *Life* a *Sacrifice* for them. To be of opinion that the Earth is Round, and to *Die* for that Opinion, rather than smother it, tho he be in the right that asserts it, yet is it so far from being a *Vertue*, that 'tis utterly inexcusable: And for him who *lost* his Bishoprick upon such an account, I cannot tell which to accuse most, him of *Obstinacy* and *Folly*, or his *Adversaries* of *Tyranny*, *Ignorance*, and incorrigible *Stupidity*.

And as those *Truths* which concern not Religion, cannot justify any *Suffering*; so neither do I hold him unblamable, that should lay down his *Life* for some Trifle, some small *Puntillo* in Religion. We reckon not all that *Die* in the Field, good *Soldiers*; and we have as little reason to conclude all that *Die* in Matters of Religion, *Martyrs*. We owe more Respect to the Commandment

ment of God, and to the Law of Nature of Self-preservation within us, than that we should *Destroy* our selves (for so I must style it) upon a *Ceremony*, or *Indifferent* Point. He must be of a very untractable temper, who cannot yield to such *petty* Observances, and wink at those Matters, wherein there is nothing of Impiety, or Immorality; nothing but what he himself adjudges *Indifferent*.

But whoso *Suffers* on a *Fundamental* Point of Religion, for an Article of *Faith*, or Matter of *Practise*, and so for the discharge of a sure and good *Conscience*; he it is that is *Persecuted for Righteousness*, for *Christ's sake*. Whatsoever a Mans *Sufferings* are, whether they be by the *Cross* or by the *Flames*, by *Scourgings* or by *Imprisonments*, by *Slandering*s or by *Reviling*s, or but the least *Indignity* whatsoever; if this be the *Cause*, our Saviour pronounces him *Blessed*, and he shall be *Blessed*: *Blessed are ye*, says he, *when men shall Revile you, and Persecute you*, meaning for *Righteousness sake*, which he expressed before. So that not onely he that *Dies*, but he that is *Revil'd* also, he that is any way *Persecuted for Righteousness sake*, is so far forth a *Sufferer for Christ*, a *Martyr* of his.

But then, on the other side, he that *Suffers* upon any other account, when it lies in his power to avoid it, what Reward or Applauses soever he may receive from his own Party, or Admirers; he must not expect any Reward or *Approbation* of God; for he obeys no *Command*, no *Injunction* of his; and has not the least Title in his Word to encourage him thereto.

2. That a Man may be said to *Suffer for Christ's sake*, 'tis requir'd that he have a *Call*. To *Suffer for Christ*, when a Man is put to the severe Dilemma of his Enemies,

mies, either of Denying Him, or Suffering for Him, is Laudable, Glorious, and Honourable ; but where This may be cautiously avoided, where *Death* may be escap'd with the security of Religion and Reputation ; here Nature, Prudence, and Christianity teach us *Preservation* of Self. Without God's *Command* we cannot *Suffer Martyrdom* : Die we may, but not *Martyrs* ; Suffer we may, but not for *Christ's sake* : for to *Suffer for Christ's sake*, is to *Suffer* when he requires the same ; that is to say, when Providence has put us under an unavoidable *Necessity* either of *Suffering*, or *Transgressing* any *Command* of His : for where there is such a fatal *Necessity*, there is His *Call*, His *Appointment*, His *Command* to *Suffer* ; and it is *This* that makes the *Martyr* : But and if we chuse *Sufferings* in any other Case, we do it for our own sakes, rather than His ; for the gratification of a Humour, it may be ; not the pleasing Him.

'Tis our Fault therefore, and not our Duty, to draw down *Evils* upon our selves ; and These can onely entitle us to greater. When we run to the *Stake* without a *Call*, we may thank our selves for the Punishment of our Folly. Christ will say, *Who hath requir'd This at your hands ?* What Commission, what Warrant have you from me ? You are your own *Executioners*, will he say ; you are your own *Murderers* ; and who must bear the Blame, the Punishment, but your selves ? 'Tis no part of our Religion (what the *Romanists* reckon of theirs) to punish our own Iniquity with the *Rod*, and our Sin with *Scourges* : *We have not so learn'd Christ*. No, 'tis a *Call*, 'tis a *Command* that must hallow our *Sufferings* : without *This*, we are our own *Martyrs*, not *Christ's* ; and for any thing we can learn from his Word, those *Flames* we run into may be but the Passage into *Hell Fire*.

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I am not ignorant, how that some Primitive Christians have out of great zeal invited their *Executioner*, nay, forc'd him, as it were, to do his Office: but this was out of a Zeal not according to Knowledge; and tho Infinite Goodness may have pardon'd them, their Mistake being unaffected, their Design noble, and their Love pure and Seraphical; I say, tho God may, as he is abundantly gracious, have pardon'd, accepted the Men, yet we have no reason to conclude them *Martyrs*.

3. That a Man may be said to *Suffer for Christ's sake*, 'tis requir'd that he have heartily *forsaken* all his *Sins*.

'Tis possible some Men, out of a blind mistaken Zeal, would readily *Die for God*, and *Religion*, yet very difficultly quit a *Lust* for them. There may be Those, who can be content to *lose* their Lives for their Faith; but not to part with a darling *Sin*: whether it is, that they think their imaginary *Martyrdom* will atone for all, for all their dearly-beloved *Vices*; or, that these Bosom-friends cannot hurt them, as being very consistent with God's Grace and Favour: or whether it be, that they are possess'd with a sullen Moroseness, an Enthusiastical Temper, an over-hasty Desire of Glory, or, perhaps, of an unhappy Mixture of These.

Now, as to the Case of any such Person, (if indeed there be any such, as I am apt to believe there have been, and therefore may be again) this I do affirm; That whoever he be, he is not a *Sufferer for Christ*; because he harbours a profest Enemy of His. I say, should any Man *Die*, and very strongly fancy, that he *Dies for Christ*; yet if he should retain any one *Lust*, one *Sin*, till he *Die*, (how favourable an Opinion soever others may have of him, or he of himself) I cannot allow him the *Crown*, nor indeed the *Name* of a *Martyr*; no,
nor

nor the plain, but honest, Character of a good Christian. And I give this Reason for it; To retain any one *Sin*, is to retain a profest Enemy of Christ; which it is not the part of a true *Martyr*, or of a good Christian to do. Indeed, for the same Man to *Die* in *Sin*, and to *Sin*; or, (if you please) to *Crucifie* Christ, (as every one does who wilfully sins against Him) and yet at the same time to be *Crucified* for him, is as far from being possible, as it is to serve Christ, and Belial; God, and Mammon. In truth, it amazes me to consider, how any Man should fancy, that he *Dies* to avoid *Sin*, and yet at that very time entertain and cherish *Sin* in his Bosom: For is it to be imagin'd, that he should *Die* rather than *offend* God in one Point, when he actually *offends* him in another? Is't to be imagin'd, that he should *Die* for the Love of *Christ*, when he does not shew any Love (where he chiefly ought) in keeping His Commandments? Or, in other Words, that he should Love the Lord his God with all his Heart, when he suffers *Sin* to lodge there too? Believe me, vain Man, whosoever thou art, if This be thy Case, thou art under a Delusion: For, alas! one little puny *Vice* will be enough to keep thee from a *Crown*; and (which is worse) will be enough to weigh thee down to Hell. For there is nothing can alter the Nature of *Sin*: no *Sufferings*, but those of our Saviour, can wash away the Guilt of it; and nothing but an unfeign'd Repentance, can make even *These* available to thee; if thou look pleasantly on any one *Sin*, if thou give it thine Heart, and wilt never shake Hands with it, thy *Sufferings* will not, Salvation it self cannot, save thee.

Thus I have given (as I humbly conceive) the true *Notion* and Requisites of *Suffering* for *Christ*.

And

And this prepares the way for the second thing propos'd, which was,

2. To shew, That those among us, who renounce our Communion, and *Suffer* for it, do very unjustly pretend to *Suffering* for *Christ*.

And this we shall easily do from the Principles now laid down : For if no Man may be said to *Suffer* for *Christ*, but he whose *Cause* is good, who has a *Call*, and has heartily *Foraken* all his *Sins* ; it is visible to the weakest Eye, that the Persons I am speaking of, do very vainly pretend to it, neither of these being their Case : For,

1. Their *Cause* is not good. They do not *Suffer* for any Article of *Faith*, nor any Matter of *Duty* ; but, on the contrary, for pure *Disobedience* to the Laws of the Land. And now These do not require any thing to be *Believed*, or *Done*, but what is agreeable with, or not contrary to the Laws of God : and we are in all such Cases to be *subject to the Higher Powers* ; we are to *submit to every such Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake* : So that to disobey the Laws of the Land, (those, I mean, which are not purely Penal) is in very deed to disobey the Laws of God : and if their Transgression of those Laws be not, then neither is their *Suffering* for it in Obedience to the Laws of God : and, if so, we are to look to the Rule ; That cannot be *Suffering* for *Christ's* sake, which is not in *Obedience* to some *Law* of God.

2. They have no *Call*.

They are not under a *Necessity* of *Suffering* or *Sinning*. Themselves do many of them acknowledge, That there's nothing sinful in our Communion ; and so many of them I reckon self-condemned : and for the rest, if they know any thing so, let them produce it, let them make

it appear: I am sure they cannot; and would they but peruse those Useful and Excellent Discourses, which are lately written for their Satisfaction herein, they must needs see, and, if they have any spark of Ingenuity, yea, or any sense of Religion, (as I hope they have) they must needs acknowledge too, the unreasonableness of such a Charge, and chuse, rather than complain of their *Sufferings*, to repent of the Occasion,

3. They have not heartily *forsoaken* all their *Sins*.

That *Schism* is a *Sin*, a great one, is allow'd on all hands; and that those who *divide* and *separate* from us, are engag'd in a *Schism*, is not to be deny'd. For *Schism*, in plain English, is nothing else but *Division*, or *Separation*; and, in Scripture-language, is the *Division* of, or *Separation* from, the Holy Catholick Church: And to suppose that they do not *separate* from the Catholick Church, who *separate* from Ours, which is a sound, a pure, and considerable part of it, is as absurd, as it is to imagine, that the Hand may be *divided*, cut off from the Arm, and yet continue still a Member of the Body.

So then, it is very clear, that all those who make a *Separation* from Our Church, (soasmuch as it must be a causeless Separation) will be found guilty of a very deadly *Sin*, of a *Sin* that certainly unchurches them, destroys their Membership, and all their Relation to Christ's Body, the Church: insomuch, that they are very greatly mistaken, who think they may *suffer* for Him in these Circumstances.

Indeed, it is impossible, in the Judgment of the Fathers; and so it is in the Nature of the Thing, for a Man who is out of the Church, to *suffer* in the true Gospel-notion of the Word; for *Suffering* in the Gospel-sense, presupposes *Life* in the Gospel-sense: That which is dead,

(II)

dead, being void of *Sense*, it feels no *Pain*, apprehends no *Evil*: And now the Man that is out of the Church, is perfectly *dead* in the *Gospel*-reckoning; for he is no Member of Christ's Body, and therefore has no *Life*, no Vital Sense or Influences from Him: it being with this Mystical Body, as it is with the Natural; its Vertue, and Influence, and Vital Powers are confin'd to its own Members: and whatsoever is out of the Sphere of its Activity, is *dead*, and senseless with respect to It.

So then, the *Schismatick* (who is never the less out of the Church for his thrusting himself out of it) can never *suffer*, as Christ and the Gospel account *Suffering*; because there is no *Suffering* without *Life*; no Gospel-*suffering* without Gospel-life; and no Gospel-life but from Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life: and there is nothing of that deriv'd from Christ, but what is communicated to His Members.

I shall not dispute the possibility of the Salvation of those who *die* in a *Schism*; but this I will say, now that I am slidden into this Argument, (and out of pure Charity and Compassion, out of a tender regard to their poor Souls, I say it) They are out of the ordinary way to Salvation. Whether, or how far they are some of them excusable; (for I am apt to believe, and forward to allow, that some of them are well-meaning, and grossly ignorant:) I say, Whether, or how far the Ignorance, and sincere Endeavours of these will excuse them, I leave (as I ought) to the superabundant Mercy and Goodness of the great Judge of us all; and would only advise them seriously and frequently to cast with themselves, and put it home to their own Consciences, whether they do *seek Peace*, and *ensue it*, in good earnest? whether they do *endeavour*, to the utmost of their power,

to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace ? whether they do, *whereto they have already attain'd, walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing* ; conforming to our Church, and communicating with it, as far as their Consciences give them leave ? If they did this, (as they cannot deny but they ought to do) we might then hope for a general, a thorow Union, and Conformity ; we might then expect their Complaints would cease with their *Sufferings*, the Occasion of them : for certainly, they that will go as far as they may, in compliance with the Orders and Offices of our Church, can never sit down under a thorow Conformity : there being nothing requir'd, or expected in our Communion, but what is very decent, inoffensive, and orderly ; nothing, but what may be to the edifying, and satisfaction of any Man, that has but his Thoughts and Reason about him.

I proceed,

3. To shew, That all those Christians who *suffer*, rather than they will conform to the Church of *Rome*, do truly and really *suffer* for *Christ* : Provided always, that they do not allow themselves in any known *Sins* ; but that they equally, heartily forsake them all.

For the clearing of this Point likewise, I need not say much. An easie Reflexion on the Principles foregoing, together with some few Doctrines and Practices of the Church of *Rome*, will abundantly suffice.

Be it therefore consider'd, That where the Laws of any Church, or Society of Men, do clash and interfere with the Laws of God, the Apostolical Rule ought to be ours ; we are to *obey God, rather than Man*. The Reason is plain : The Commands of God are directly, constantly, and universally binding ; whereas the Laws and Injunctions of Men do no farther oblige, than as they agree

agree and square with These. If they do, and as far as they do, run counter to the Laws of God, the Matter of them is *sinful*; and they are, for that Reason, null and void: Neither is it in the power of any Humane Law, or Dispensation, to make them obligatory or lawful.

And now this is the Case of those Christians, who *suffer* rather than they will conform to the Church of *Rome*. That Church requires several things to be *believ'd*, that ought not to be believ'd, as being false and erroneous; repugnant to the Doctrines of Christianity, and the Light of Reason: It requires several things to be perform'd, that cannot be perform'd without *Sin*, without a Transgression of a Divine Law: infomuch that if She should be obey'd, God would be disobey'd; an Universal Obedience to both, being absolutely impossible.

Let all things be done to edifying, says the Holy Spirit by the Apostle; particularly forbidding all Prayers, and other Publick Offices, in an unknown Tongue. Ay, but (says the Church of *Rome*) you must pray in *Latin*, whether it be edifying, or no; whether it be a Known, or Unknown Tongue.

Our Saviour said, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him Only shalt thou serve*. As for the worshipping of Angels in particular, an Angel forbid it: *See thou do it not*, was the Charge of one of them to St. *John* in the *Revelation*. And as for Saints deceas'd, they do not (if we will believe the Scripture), (and it is a part of their Happiness, that they do not) understand the Affairs of the World. Thus *Solomon* tells us, *The Dead know nothing at all*; and *Abraham* is said to be *Ignorant of us*: And now those that are Ignorant of us, and know Nothing relating

relating to us, must be very improper Objects of our Prayers. But so it is, he that will be a Papist, must worship Angels ; he must pray to Gods that neither understand nor hear him ; to the Souls of Departed Saints, and of notorious Miscreants ; yea, and to such Imaginary Men, as in all probability had never any Being upon Earth ; to the verifying of that of the Apostle in the most Literal sense, *An Idol is Nothing in the world.* Again,

The Scripture tells us, (and it is a considerable part of our Christian Faith) That Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the Right-hand of God the Father Almighty ; and that (having continued there till the end of the World) from thence he shall come to judge the Quick and the Dead: And our Reason tells us, that a Body cannot be in two several Places at the same time ; insomuch that the Angel's Inference was strong and irrefragable, *He is not here, for he is risen.* And yet, in contradiction to the Holy Scripture, in contradiction to all Sense and Reason, the Church of Rome doth believe, and doth exact this Belief of all her Members, that he is Bodily present upon Earth, where, and whenever the Priest shall please to command him down ; that is to say, as often as he shall think fit to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass ; for Christ himself is that Sacrifice, (if you'll believe them) and you must eat Him, Flesh, and Bones, and all ; and believe that you do so, at least declare that you believe it, if you would pass for a true *Roman*, if you would do as they do. And now should you declare your firm Assent to This, That you eat the real Body of the Son of God, and at the same time believe nothing less ; why ? you'd sin beyond all the Pardons and Indulgences of *Rome* ; and nothing but

a sincere Repen tance could set you right: Indeed you would make a Declarat ion againſt your own Judgment, and be evidently ſelf condemn'd.

And now this is the Caſe of thoſe *ſuffering* Chriſtians we ſpeak of. They know, and are aſſur'd, that Prayer in an Unknown Tongue is *unediſying*, and *unlawful*, *forbidden* by the Apoſtle, and *unpraclis'd* by the Primitive Church. They are fully ſatiſfied of the ſinfulneſs of Saint-worſhip, and Angel-worſhip, with the reſt of the *Idolatrours* Practices of the *Romiſh* Church. They do ſtedfaſtly believe, that their Saviour is in Heaven, there to abide till the Day of Judgment; and therefore not on Earth. They cannot reconcile the ſeveral Contradiſtions of the Bodily Preſence in the Sacrament; and being they cannot reconcile them, (and indeed it is impoſſible they ſhould) they will not, nor can they believe them; and being they cannot believe them, they will not upon any Terms profeſs that they do.

Theſe are the Reaſons, with many others, (which I forbear to reckon up, becauſe I need not) I ſay, Theſe are ſome of the Reaſons which prevail with them to ſtand out againſt all the Temptations and Terrours of *Rome*: They cannot comply with That Church, becauſe their Compliance would be ſinful; and they therefore *ſuffer*, becauſe they cannot comply. They embrace Suffering, not out of choice, not for the love of its ſelf; but out of a Principle of *Obedience*, out of pure Obedience to plain, particular Commands of God: So their *Cauſe* is *Good*; they would certainly *ſin*, if they did not *ſuffer*: And That is their *Call*.

4. I am now to conſider the Excellency and Uſefulneſs of True and real Suffering for Chriſt. And this will appear,

I. In

I. In that *Persecutions* and *Sufferings* for Christ's sake are so far from *weakening* and *depressing* Religion, that they *advance* and *improve* it.

It must be confess'd, that *Persecutions* may, and sometimes do prevail so far, as to debar those that labour under them of Publick Prayer, of the Publick and Solemn Administration of the Word and Sacraments, and of other outward Exercises of Religion: But these are but Means to promote and encourage, to signify and declare to the World our *Faith* and *Obedience*; which two are the onely *Substantials* of Religion. But now no Tyranny, no Rage of *Persecutors*, can force us to quit These. To *Believe*, and to *Obeey*, it is the Gift of God, and, thro his Grace, lies in our own power; so that Religion may be maintain'd amidst the worst, and most bloody *Persecutions*, abound and flourish under a *Nero*, or *Diocletian*.

'Tis true indeed, a Publick, Solemn Profession of *Faith*, and the several outward Acts of Religion, are very highly convenient, yea, and necessary too, when Men are at liberty for the one and the other: But where this Liberty is perfectly denied, their Necessity is ceas'd, and a Dispensation follows of course; God accepts here (we need not doubt it) the Will for the Deed. He knows when, and how far we *believe*: He knows the Measures of our *Obedience*, and from what Principle it flows; and where he finds us sound at the Heart, he easily dispenses with the rest. He is infinitely Wise, and sees what we would do: He is infinitely Just, and requires not Impossibilities.

Thus may our Religion live and stand out, maugre all the Enemy's Batteries against it, maugre all the Powers and Stratagems of Hell call'd out for its Destruction.

And

And indeed, if That must have suffered according as its Professors did, it had been in every Mans power to rob us of it; nay, what thro the Malice and the Wiles of the Devil, and what thro the Power and Wickedness of Men, it had been lost, undoubtedly lost, stifled in its Infancy, and we had scarce heard of the very Name of a Christian.

But (thanks be to God) the Case is quite otherwise: For Christianity flourish'd most under its heaviest Pressures. The *Sufferings* of some made others in love with such a *Suffering* Religion; and for one *Martyr*, there were gain'd several Converts to Christianity: for there was a kind of Seminal Principle in the *Martyrs Blood*, and out of their *Graves* sprung Christians.

And truly, I cannot see why Religion may not thrive in the most *Troublesom* Times. A sound Belief, and a suitable Practice, Piety and an entire Resignation of Mind, Meekness and Sobriety, Justice and Charity, with the rest of the Principal Duties of Religion, may be as religiously exercis'd, and therefore as well accepted, in *Evil*, as in *Prosperous* Times.

Nay, some eminent Vertues there are which must be reserv'd for *Foul* weather, for a day of *Adversity*; for indeed they can't be exerted at any other time. For instance; To be Patient, presupposes *Sufferings*, under which we may be so. How can we take up the *Cross*, unless there be one? How can we forgive *Injuries*, unless they have been offer'd us? How can we do Good to our *Enemies*, if we have none? There must be some that *Despitesfully* use us, and *Persecute* us, or how can we Pray for them that do so? So that *Persecution* does Promote the Exercise, and consequently Heighten the Glory of Christianity, and does rather prune than root out its Professors: which is agreeable to that of the Apostle to the *Philippians*, c. 1, v. 12, 13, 14. *But I would you should understand, brethren, that the Things which hapned unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of*

the Gospel; so that my Bonds in Christ are manifest in the Palace, and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord waxing confident by my Bonds, are much more bold to speak the Word without fear.

Then what if we should suppose our Church to be in danger of Popery? We may not, we must not endeavour to preserve it by any *Unlawful* means, and with the loss of our Innocence. No; Religion needs not our help, or our defence: at least, it requires not any *Irregular* course to support it. If the Lord please, he can and will defend it, against all the Oppositions, all the Machinations of its Adversaries: If, on the other side, it be his pleasure to let it fall, (as indeed our Provocations, many and great, give us reason to fear it is) fall it must, notwithstanding all the *Unjustifiable* Proceedings and Endeavours of Men. *Except the Lord keep the City, the Watchman waketh but in vain:* And do we think, that the ready way to engage him to keep it, is to offend him? or that he will take care of us, and our Religion, when we neither care for him, nor his Laws? Or, do we entertain a Fancy altogether as idle, That he must assist us, whether he will or no; that he is under a fatal necessity of giving us his encouraging, his helping Hand? No, certainly: As he is in no wise forc'd to assist us, so our *Presumption*, and our other *Sins*, are in no wise likely to invite him to it: He sees nothing in our *Irreligious* Practices so pleasing, as to oblige him to look upon us: He sees nothing so inviting as our *Refignation* and our *Obedience*. If we *Resign* up our selves wholly to him, and *Obey* him in all his Commands, he can, and he will protect us; for he that putteth his trust in the Lord, shall want no manner of thing that is good. The holy Lives, and the effectual fervent Prayers of the Righteous avail much: but and if those few who mourn in *Sion* should not, will our *Sins* be able to preserve us? If *Obedience* cannot, will *Treason* and *Rebellion* secure us? Good God! that ever any
who

who pretend to Reason, yea, and Conscience too, should go about to secure Religion by the Violation of it ! that ever any should fancy they may be safe in their Sins, yea, and made so by them ! Certainly there is somewhat of Witchcraft in Rebellion, and more than a bare Resemblance betwixt them ; or Men could never take up such *Devilish* Resolutions, against all Law, Reason, and Religion ; and that too with a private self-flattery, with the leave and with the applause of Conscience.

Then let us not bow to the sly Insinuations, to the enchanting Delusions of the grand Deceiver. *If the Lord be God, follow him, and depend upon him.* This is Wisdom's Advice, *Commit thy Works unto the Lord, (says she) and thy thoughts shall be establish'd ;* that is, thou shalt see the Accomplishment of all thy Laudable, of all thy Innocent Designs and Desires.

Then why should we place our Hopes in our Armies, and an uncertain Multitude, for the Security of our Church ; when we may, and ought to look up unto him who is *the Author and Giver of all good things ? It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put any Confidence in Man : It is better to Trust in the Lord, than to put any Confidence in Princes.* *If the Lord be on our side, we need not fear what Man doth unto us. Tho all Nations compass'd us round about, yet in the Name of the Lord we should destroy them.* He can turn the Heart of the most *Persecuting* Governour, or he can hold his Hand, that he shall not hurt us. Blessed be God, we have no reason to expect or fear any thing like *Persecution* : but, on the contrary, as we do at present enjoy all the Blessings of an *easy* Government, and a most *Gracious* Prince ; so we have abundant reason to hope for, and to expect the continuance of them : For *Mercy* and *Smoothness* sit triumphant on the Royal Brows ; there is something of the Divine *Philanthropy* runs in the Blood, and is adopted into the Royal Line : and it is a symptom of an

evil Mind, to suspect any danger of *cruelty* or *severity* there; where these *good Qualities* Reign.

Let us, however, put the Case, for Argument sake, in the very worst Circumstances, That a Popish and *Tyrannical* Prince should Reign over us. We must not *oppose*, and *fight* against him; for so we should fight against God: For, whatever his Opinions, whatever his Practices be, he is His Vicegerent, he is appointed and substituted by Him. 'Tis not for us then to cry, with the Sons of Belial in the Parable, *We will not have This man to reign over us*: 'Tis not for us to use any *Unwarrantable* Means to shut him out. No; This were to *distrust* Providence, and to *fight* against it, This were to do Evil, that Good might come of it; and we know the Resolve of all sober judicious Casuists in the Point, That we should not commit one single Sin, tho' twere to save the whole World from Destruction.

Now therefore, if to Distrust Providence, and to Fight against it, be (as we may reasonably conclude it is) a forfeiting all our Title to the Divine *Protection*; what *security*, what *grounds* of Hope can we have, or propose to our selves, by any *Illegal*, any *Unchristian* Proceedings? What? can we hope to conquer the Almighty with our Armies? or terrifie Him into a compliance with our Wishes? Are we stronger than he? David said, *My trust hath been in the Lord, therefore shall I not fall*: So that, by the Rule of Contraries, we may conclude, That if our Trust be not in the Lord, we shall fall an unpitied Sacrifice to our own Folly, and to an Offended God. And indeed God himself has declar'd as much; *Wo to the rebellious children, (saith the Lord) that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin*, Isa. 30. 1.

Then far be it from us to take *Ill* Courses for the *Security* of our Religion, seeing all *such* must of necessity be unseasonal; or, if they were not, yet, that it is more Christian-like,

like, and more Prudent, to engage God in our cause, by an entire *Submission* to, a hearty *Acquiescence* in his Dispensations; for so should we *Secure* our Religion, and our Innocency too; and, come what would, we could but *Suffer* unto *Death*; when our Religion would *Advance* by our *Fall*; *Spring up* and *Flourish* by our *Martyrdom*: So that it is every whit as Unreasonable, as it is Impious to go about to *Secure* Religion by the *breach* of its *Laws*, to *secure* it from *Persecutions*; seeing it is *raised*, *promoted*, and *ennobled* by them. So *glorious* are the effects, so great is the *Excellency*, and the *Usefulness* of *Suffering* for *Christ*: which yet will appear farther, if we consider,

2. How that it promotes Peace and Unity amongst our selves.

That *Peace* and *Unity* are *Excellent* and *Amiable*, I presume needs no proof; especially in a Christian Country; these being the proper badges of Christianity.

How very apt *Persecutions* are to *Cement* and *Quiet* the Minds of Men, let it be our present consideration. And we shall certainly find Them the most practicable, ('tis well if they be not the only) Expedient now left for the bringing back of that *Unity*, which hath so long withdrawn it self, is so greatly talked of, and yet so little contended for in good earnest by this our *Broken*, and miserably *Divided* Nation.

When he must pass for the best Religionist, whose Tongue, or Pen is keenest, and traduces his Neighbour most according to Art. When it is the diversion of some, the business of others, the Custom of very many, first to create *Differences*, and then to maintain them: To sow *Divisions*, enflame our *Disagreements*, and to stir up *Strife* all the day long.

What cure, what remedy more proper for such *Fends* and *Animosities* among us, than that which diverts our thoughts another way, and employs our Minds in our own concerns?

Now

Now This is the effect of *Suffering for Christs sake*, This the good Office of our most Cruel *Persecutors*: For while they *Persecute* us from City to City; they give us little leisure, or opportunity to fall out by the way; whilst they continually *Molest* and *Abuse* us, we have little stomach, or occasion to molest, to abuse one another, or to draw (our Pens I mean) unless it be for manifestos of our innocence, and in the defence of our common cause, So that the *Pressures* of our Enemies (like those on Arched Buildings) make our *Union* the firmer, and those *Storms* without us (as it were by an antiperistasis) produce a *Calm* within.

We find this experimentally true in former times. When Heathen *Persecutors* reign'd, there was a perfect *Harmony* and *Agreement* among Christians. They laid aside all *Piques* and *Anomisties* between themselves, and employ'd their Minds in better thoughts. They were in continual expectation of leaving This World, and therefore in continual preparation for another. The *Clouds* that hung over their Heads, engag'd them, as far as they might, to keep at home: Or if they haply wandered about; 'twas for their own safety; not for the *Destruction* of their Neighbours, their Friends, and Countrey-men, and Fellow-Christians; not for the *Destruction* of their most bitter Enemies; of those very Enemies, who made them wander.

Hence was it, that Christians then lived like true Fellow-members of Christ their Head: And as they own'd one Common Religion, so they embraced one and the same *Fate*; and cheerfully marched together thro the *Flames*, There were then no Separatists, no Dissenters among them; but and if their *Flames* (like those of the *Theban* Brethren) diffused, and spread; 'twas not out of *Enmity*, or *Dislike*; but for greater *Splendor*, for *Triumph*.

Let us in the 3^d. place consider the *Excellency* of *Suffering* for Christ in those four noble Virtues which are its inseparable attendants, namely, Fortitude, Patience, Faith, and Love.

1. All

1. All *Suffering* for *Christ's sake* is attended with *Fortitude*.

That Christianity obliges us to be *Valiant*, we may learn from *St. Paul*, where he sets out the compleat Armour of a Christian: He bids us *take the Helmet of Salvation, the Word of the Spirit, and the Shield of Faith*, with other such like accoutrements; *wherewith* (says he) *you shall be able to quench all the fiery Darts of the Wicked*.

Now what signifies an Armour to a Dastardly Spirit, to one that will not, dares not use it?

I shall take for granted then, that as we are *Christians*, we should be *Valiant*.

And that those who *Suffer* for *Christ's sake* are truly (if not only) so will appear from the formidable Power and Resolution of the Enemies, they encounter, conquer. And they are that terrible Triumvirate, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. These indeed are the mortal enemies of all Mankind; but they are the most violent opposers of all *Suffering* Christians: Not that they are against *Suffering* in general (for that is their aim and endeavour) but against their *Suffering* for *Christ's sake*; such as will give them a very clear Title to an infinitely greater share of *Bliss*.

Now then let us a little examine the strength of their Forces, that we may more easily guess at the *Courage* of their Conquerours.

And first for the World; and that suggests to them the undoubted reality, and experimental sense of Earthly Felicities; displaying its several Poms and Vanities; and setting them off to the best advantage.

Thus it represents Honour, as the delight of the Soul, and spring of endeavour; the source of all generous undertakings, and the reward of them too: And at the same time insinuat's that *Suffering* is an argument of an Ignoble Spirit, the sure forerunner of Disgrace: Or, if it does pass (as sometimes it must) for Vertuous and Honourable, the
Honour

Honour that attends it is but the shadow of Virtue, and less than a shadow the other side the grave.

To Riches it gives the flattering Title of a God, the certain procurer of all that is needful; of all that makes Men great, or happy; undervaluing, ridiculing Heaven, and its Treasures, the unsearchable Riches of Christ; calling it a Vain Creature of fancy or the imaginary issue of hope.

Next it proceeds to cry up Pleasure as most friendly to Nature, and most agreeable to Flesh and Blood; the center of all Mens wishes and desires, and the relisher of all conditions. Then does it enlarge upon the free use of the Creatures; averring, that they were made to be enjoy'd; and that they then only answer the design of their Being, when they serve to the Delight and Pleasure of Man, to the thorow Gratification of all his Senses.

In comes the Flesh, and seconds it; asserting upon its own Experience the agreeable sense of Worldly Delights, the pleasing, the ravishing variety of wild Mirth, and more sober Epicurism; and remonstrating the Uneasiness of Self-denial, of Suffering in any way; the rude, and terrible assaults of Pain and Torture, the unmerciful Pangs of a sudden and violent Death; the most exquisite sense of an unnatural hastned Dissolution.

Nor is the Devil all this while idle: He very well understands, to whom the Crown is promised; even to them that are *Faithful unto Death*; and These are the prime Objects of his envy; to These he lays the closest Siege. Hence is it that he is always ready to back, and strengthen the others reasons; and to offer new ones of his own: So that we need not wonder if he terms it *Folly, Madness, Any thing*, to Deny our selves, and to *Suffer* freely any way in obedience to we know not what; to an invisible God, and to an unaccountable thing called Conscience.

These, or such like, may we imagine, are the Arguments

guments made use of, the Spiritual Forces rallied, against *Suffering*: And tho they be in themselves very far from invincible; yet all circumstances examin'd they will be found very difficultly conquerable: Forasmuch, as besides that the World with its gilded Vanities is present and sensible; and so more apt to affect the Mind; besides that the Devil, such is his Power, has a secret influence on Mens Souls and Faculties; and such is his subtilty, is forward to embrace every promising opportunity, and sute his Arguments to the temper of the Persons; a fair way of prevailing: I say, besides all this, there is the Flesh, a treacherous Friend, that is to say, the worst sort of enemies, which opens the Door to the rest, and makes them flexible, inclinable to yield: So that upon all, or either of these accounts we have reason to expect, or a very great *Courage*, or a very little opposition.

And yet if we consider farther, how that Self-preservation is a Law, a Principle Implanted in them; and that there is a violence done to Nature in every *Suffering*, greater or less according as the *Suffering* is: We cannot but conclude, that these, and the like considerations must work very powerfully upon any Man whomsoever; and consequently (which is the thing I would be at) that That *Courage* which engages and baffles them all, and buoys Men up against all these Tumults and Disorders of the Mind, must be as truly great, as it is victorious and successful.

And now This is the *Courage*. This the *Glory* of our *Suffering* Christians, who bravely prefer *Torments*, and *Death* it self to the Tempting Vanities of the World; boldly resist the Devil, a powerful and daring, a subtle and a malicious Adversary; and answer withal to the feeling arguments of Flesh and Blood, as the Captain of their Salvation did before them, not my Will but thine be done.

Now that This *Courage* so conspicuous in them does truly, and really deserve the name of *Fortitude*, will appear from the general notion and usage of the Word. For with Mora-

lists the nature of Fortitude consists in a mediocrity between rashness and fear. But now those who *Suffer* for *Christ's* sake are equally careful in avoiding the extreams. They will not *over-hastily* Throw away their lives; they will not *Sacrifice* them to a *Passion* or *Humour*; but consider before hand the goodness of the Cause; when, and how it may oblige them to *Suffer*; with all the other Circumstances.

And as for the other extream of Valour, *Fear*; they are as far from that, as from an inconsiderate *Fool-hardiness*: They *Fear* God indeed; but that is a *Fear*, that *bath no Torment*; a *Fear*, that is consistent with love: They *fear* Him, and for that reason are incapable of *Fearing* Men, incapable of *Dreading* even the *Tortures* of the *Rack*, or the *Tedious Loathsomeness* of a *Dungeon*; because from the *Fear* of God arises the observance of his *Commands*: And he that keeps the *Commandments* of God *will not* (nor need he) *Fear*, *tho the Earth be moved*; and *tho the Hills be carried into the midst of the Sea*. So then, they will not be *Afraid* of them that *kill the body*, and *after that have no more that they can do*: Why? Because they *Fear* him that ought to be *Feared*; *Him, who, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell*.

Thus do they keep the middle way betwixt *Rashness*, and *Fear*; thrusting not themselves into dangers, when they need not; and sparing not to shew their *Valour*, when occasion requires.

2. All *suffering* for *Christ's* sake is attended with *Patience*.

That *Patience* is a *Virtue* is in every *Mans* Mouth: That *Suffering* is necessary to the exercise of it, I have already observed. It remains that we consider the *Excellency*, the *Surpassing* nature thereof.

Now the *Gallantry* of *Passive* Courage is such, as is beyond the ambition of ordinary men. There are few that have it in that full measure, as to endure the *Terrible* tests of *Torments*. By this it is that the Upright Christian Shows, how *Great* he truly is, Whoso impatiently bears *Affliction* makes it appear, that they that inflict them are greater than himself; but
he

he, who braves it, shews that 'tis out of the power of any thing but guilt to make him *Tremble*.

'Tis *Great*, and it is *Glorious* to shew a *Bravery* in the Field, a *Fearless* daring of the Enemy, and *Defiance* of danger: And yet this may be ow'd to the hopes either of revenge or victory; and to the promising probability of an escape. But to behold a necessary, and an unavoidable *Grave*; to mount the *Scaffold* with an *undaunted* Look, and an undissembled *Courage*, this is most eminently *Brave* and *Noble*, I had almost said, peculiar to a *Suffering* Christian, to a Christian *Suffering* for Christ's sake.

3. All *Suffering* for *Christ's* sake is attended with *Faith*.

The excellency of that *Faith* for which, and by which we *Suffer* is evident, in that it transcends our reason, and the Examinations of Sense. To *Believe* a thing, we see with our Eyes, or fathom with our reason, is not *Faith*, but knowledge or persuasion; but to *Believe* that, which neither Eye hath seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive; to *Credit* that which we could not *Believe*, but that we *Believe* withal, that there is an everlasting Being, who can do all things: This is *Faith*, an *Heroick*, an *Exalted* *Faith*.

I must confess, I cannot approve of that resolution of *Tertullian*, *Credo, quia est impossibile*: I do therefore *believe*, because it is impossible. No; nor of His, who said there were not *Impossibilities* enough in Religion for an *Active* *Faith*; if he means (as he should) not seeming, but real *Impossibilities*: My reason is This; the very being of an *Impossibility* implies a contradiction: It supposes a thing to be, and not to be; to be possible, and not to be possible at the same time; which I am sure is impossible to conceive.

Well; but my *Faith* will soar thus high: I *Believe* a thing let it seem never so *Strange*, (and only not *Impossible*) to me, because God has said it, who cannot lie.

And as for *Miracles*, and the *Mysteries* of our Religion;

I esteem that *Faith* the noblest, which least concerns it self in prying into them : And like not that *slow-pac'd Faith* of *Nicodemus*, signified by a *How can these be?* Our Christian *Sufferer* questions not the truth of any thing his Saviour has told him, tho it seem to run almost counter to his reason. That his scattered ashes shall all be reunited, and his Soul recalled to its former habitation; tho it be *Marvelous*, yet he believes it; tho he knows not how, and it looks like *Impossible*, yet he is assur'd of it as much as if 'twere already come to pass. He is fully persuaded of a Heaven in the midst of the *Flames*; and tho it does not yet appear what he shall be; he is Confident he shall be in a state of Bliss; and convert his Groans into Hallelujas. And This I call a *Generous*, a very *Excellent Faith*.

4. All *Suffering* of Men for *Christ's sake* is attended with *Love*; a *Love* of their Saviour for whom, and a *Love* even of their *Persecutors*, by whom they *Suffer*.

1. A *Love* of their Saviour for whom they *Suffer*.

They thorowly contemplate his *Love* to Them, which was so *Great*, as to *Die* for them; and cannot (having an opportunity, and knowing his desire) I say, they cannot but *Love* Him again, with the same Effects, with *Dying* for Him. Thus, as one flame enkindles another, does the *Love* of *Christ* beget a *Love* in them, a *Love* only inferior to His. Thus are they drawn with the cords of a Man; not such Cords as bind and must be born; but such, as, like the Nerves and Ligaments, are endued with a quality, not only of Binding, but of Supporting too. Hence is their *Love* both *firm* and *noble*; a *Love*, that soothes and ravishes the Heart amidst the acutest pains; for it reconciles *Tortures* to the most tender Constitution; and is such a *Perfect Love*, as, according to the Apostles Description, *casteth out fear*.

2. Their *Suffering* is attended with a *Love*, even of their *Persecutors*, by whom they *Suffer*.

If you Love them that Love you, what reward have you?
do

do not even the Publicans the same? And if you salute your Brethren only; what do you more than others? do not even the Publicans so? There is nothing of Generosity or Gallantry in this above other Men, above the most Barbarous of the Heathen, for they kiss and embrace those that are Nearest and Dearest to them. But to Love your Enemies, to Bless them that Curse you, to do Good to them that Hate you, and to Pray for them that Despitefully use you, and Persecute you, This is Generous, This is Heroick; it is worthy of a Christian, and like one, and truly shews you to be Disciples and Followers of Christ.

And now our *Sufferers for Christ* do certainly bear such a *Love* to their *Persecutors*; for they would otherwise disobey Christ, who requires it of them. But that a Man should *Love* Him with All his Heart, (as *Suffering* for Him does imply) and not keep His Commandments, All His Commandments, is (what I have observ'd before to be) against his Doctrine, and against Reason.

If This will not do, we have the Exemplary *Love* of our first *Martyrs* for an Argument, a Demonstration of the Matter in hand. How *Cheerfully*, how *Kindly* did They take their Sentence of *Death*? some of them *Thanking* their Judges, as if 'twere a *Favour*, as if they had design'd to *Oblige* them by it; all of them expressing an undissembled *Love*, in an unfeigned *Prayer* for them: fearful they were, and unwilling, that *Misery* and *Torments* should be their Portion, by whom themselves were to be sent to Heaven, to be sent to Heaven in a nearer and more compendious way; by whom (because *Persecuted*) as they did deserve, so they might expect a greater degree of *Bliss*.

5. I come now at length, in the last place, to offer some Motives to a resolute and cheerful *Suffering*, at what time soever it shall please God to Call us thereto: Of which there are several; but I shall sit down with two or three.

1. Then, I would have it consider'd, That all those who
are

are called to It, do meet with extraordinary Encouragements, and Assistances of the Holy Spirit.

We are sure of This, That God will require no more of us, than we shall be enabled to bear, or perform; and where we do want Strength of our own, we may very safely depend upon His.

And now to *suffer* is so repugnant to Nature, and so uneasy to the Flesh, that tho it be an extraordinary Priviledge, yet a Man had need of very great *Encouragement* to resolve upon it, and greater still to go thorow with it. It must be the *Work* of that Holy Spirit, *which alone can order the unruly Wills and Affections of Men, who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure, yea, and to suffer also, when he sees it expedient.* If we are not sufficient of our selves to think a good thought, as of our selves, much less is it in our power to Deny our selves in this signal manner, in undergoing those Bodily Pains, which the meer Natural Man dreads the thoughts of. We must therefore of necessity recur to a Divine *Influence*, to the Supernatural *Assistance* of God's Grace. And indeed, as no Man can Believe at all, unless it be *Given* him from above, unless God help his Unbelief; so no Man can shew his Faith in such an eminent Instance, without a more than ordinary *Effusion* of that Blessed Spirit, which should actuate his Faith, enlarge his Hope, enkindle his Love, and every way prepare and arm him against the *Fiery Trial*.

Whence otherwise could it be, that so many Christian Heroes joyc'd in their *Sufferings*, and Brav'd it in the last *Agonies* of their Souls; when the Devil and his *Torturing Instruments* did their Worst, and *Cruelty* display'd it self in the most direful Instances of Pain and *Horreur*? Whence could it be, but from the still small Voice of the Comforter within them, from the *Encouraging* and *Assisting* Hand of the Almighty?

I will instance in one or two, whose Memories are fresh,
their

their Names, among others, generally and deservedly re-
verenc'd, and their Cases very remarkable.

How can we suppose, that *Rose Allen* should be the
Burning of her Hand without any the least complaint, or
regret; that she should bid her *Tormentor* add to her *Pains*
and sing for *Joy* at the place of her *Execution*? I say, how
can we suppose, that she a poor Maid-servant should
prove so courageous, did not He, who can do all things
Assist her in This; or *lessen* her *Pain*, or *enable* her to bear it

To what other means, than the Divine *Impulse* and *Assistance*, can we attribute the good Bishop *Farrar* his *Wonderful Assurance* of his own future *Courage* and *Behaviour*,
and then his answerable deportment, when the time came,
and his *Sufferings* required it? he declar'd before hand to a
Friend, and (as I have heard) to other spectators also; that
if he once stir'd in the *Pains* of the *Burning* in any irregu-
lar way; they should give no credit to the Doctrine he
had before Preached to them, and was then about to *Die*
for: And not only so, but (what crown'd the rest) he
really stood unshaken, undisturb'd, and *Triumphed* rather
than *Suffered* in the *Flames*; and so he had continued past
all Peradventure, but that he was knock'd down by a ma-
licious, a Cursed Hand; for Cursed sure was the Hand that
dar'd strike, what the Lord had so plainly so signally up-
holden: And Cursed was his Family for his sake; for the Fa-
mily of the *Gravels* (which was then considerable enough)
came quickly after to beggery and want; and (as far as I
can learn) there is nothing now remaining of it, but the
Name, and one single person (a Man-servant) to secure it:
And may It never be lost, at least as long as Popery has a
being in the World.

We must, we must ascribe This also to the *Finger* of God:
We must believe it to be the Lords *Doing*; for it is marve-
lous in our Eyes. And if this be the *Work* of the Al-
mighty; we may by an easy, and natural inference con-
clude the other is so.

2. Another

2. Another motive, I would offer to your consideration, is the Example of all those *Saints, Confessors, and Martyrs*, who have gone before us,

So great were the *Sufferings*, those blessed *Saints* underwent; so bravely did they behave themselves under them; that, as it is our Duty to imitate, so it may be the highest of our ambition to equal them. Whoever sees the list of their *Sufferings* with the History of their *Severe* treatment, may be furnished with a Catalogue of well nigh all the *Sufferings* Humane Wit can devise, or Humane Nature bear. *Wild beasts*, the *Fire*, the *Scalding Bath*, the *Scaffold*, and the *Rack*, with the rest of those terrible Instruments of Heathenish *Cruelty* took away so many of them, that it must have been a Miracle as great as their Patience was, that there was any one Christian left.

Of all the Apostles, only St. *John* died a natural *Death*: nor did he escape without a Miracle: Escape, did I say? he did not escape; unless to *Die* daily be not to *Die* at all; unless a long *Banishment*, and the *Scalding Oyl*, for which he both deserved and had a Church Festival, a Day of *Martyrdom*, might be term'd an escape.

And so for the rest: There were almost as many *Martyrs* as Christians; and to be Baptised into the *Death* of Christ was in effect to resolve to *Die* as he died; and the day of *Martyrdom* was in the ordinary account of those times the Birth-day of the Christian.

Wherefore seeing we are compass'd about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses; let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us; and let us run with Patience the *Race* that is set before us. We may with much more ease traverse these *Rough* Paths, as being somewhat plain'd, and smooth'd by the footings of those that have gone before. If so many thousands of *Saints* have march'd before us, and defied all the *Threats* and *Tortures* of their Enemies; shall we be afraid to follow after them? We,
who

who are taught by their Example, that there's nothing *unsufferable*, nothing too hard for a firm *Faith*, a lively *Hope*, and a *Love* that is pure, and obstinately bent upon Duty. Did they hardly allow themselves the Name of Christians, till they were haled to *Martyrdom*, and had Sealed their Faith with their *Blood*? And shall we strike *Suffering* out of the Laws of Christianity, out of the number of Duties? Certainly we have no Reason, no Authority for it: But, and if they bore the *Cross*, who had especial tokens of God's Love, it is our part to *Bear* it too; and *Bear* it we must, as ever we hope for the *Benefits* of it. And as Christ *suffer'd* for them, leaving them an Example, that they should follow His Steps; so He, and they too in some sense, have *suffer'd* for us, leaving us an Example, that we should follow *Theirs*: Which if we do, we shall arrive at the *Haven* where They are, and where We would be; we shall receive the same *Reward* of our *Sufferings*, the same *Crown* of *Glo-ry* they are possess'd of; which is another Motive to the Duty I am recommending, to a resolute and chearful *Suffering* for Christ's sake.

And here I shall briefly consider, 1. The Certainty of this Reward. 2. The Greatness of it.

1. The Certainty of this Reward.

There is nothing more *Certain*, (for there is nothing more *Clear* and *Evident* in Scripture) than that a constant, sincere, and universal Obedience entitles Men to all the Promises of the Gospel.

And now *Suffering* for *Christ's* sake, does undeniably presuppose, or imply all this.

It implies a *Constancy*, or *Perseverance* unto the end: for if we have forsaken Christ at any time, we have at the same time disown'd him, and put our Names out of the List of his *Martyrs*.

It implies *Sincerity*: for what can possibly shew the *Reality* of our *Love* to, and *Affiance* in Christ, if *Real Pain* and *Voluntary Suffering* cannot do it.

F To

To conclude: It implies withal an *Universal Obedience*: for, as I have noted before, the Man that allows of any one *Sin*, is a profest Enemy of Christ; not a *Martyr* of His, not a *Sufferer* for Him.

But that which puts the *Reward* of *Suffering* out of all doubt, is the Word of God, in the most plain, express Terms that can be devis'd: *If you suffer, you shall also reign with (Christ),* said the Apostle. *Blessed are they that are Persecuted for Righteousness sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven,* said our Saviour himself. And many other Texts there are to the same purpose, as clear as Words can make them, and withal so commonly known, that I shall not trouble you with the repetition of them; but rather chuse to hasten to,

2. The *Greatness* of this Reward. And with that I will conclude.

And here I shall not pretend to describe what hath not entred into the Heart of Man to conceive. I only observe, That as it is above our Conception, so it is beyond our very Wishes and Desires? And what can be offered more *Encouraging* than This? What can possibly more *Cherish* our *Hopes*, and more *Animate* the *Suffering* Part of us, than that we shall see, and *enjoy* for our *Suffering* here, all, yea, more, infinitely more, than all that we can desire or wish for?

Yes; there is something more, and greater behind; tho I am equally at a loss for Words, and for Ideas of it: For, the lowest Degree of *Happiness* in *Heaven*, comes up to all that has yet been offer'd concerning it. But now the true Christian *Martyr* is a Star of the First Magnitude there: his *Happiness* surpasses that of other Saints, as far as his *Sufferings* did: This *Light Affliction*, which is but for a *Moment*, working for him a far more *Exceeding* and *Eternal* *Weight* of *Glory*.

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